

Foreign Opinion Note

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INF OPPOSITION PREVAILS ONLY IN ITALY AND BELGIUM

This paper summarizes major findings from late-April public opinion surveys in the five INF basing countries. Local firms, mostly Gallup affiliates, were used; and samples of about 1000 were obtained (500 in Belgium).

INF Opposition Rises in Belgium; Little Change Elsewhere

In the wake of Easter demonstrations, USIA surveys in the basing countries show no dramatic changes in opposition to INF deployment, except in Belgium where opposition has risen sharply (by 16 points, since last measured in July 1982).

The late-April surveys show that when INF deployment is linked to negotiations:

- o Majorities are unconditionally opposed in Italy (54%) and in Belgium (62%). And about one-third are opposed in the FRG (36%) and in the U.K. (29%).
- o Combining all of those who "would accept" INF deployment (1) without conditions or (2) contingent on the arms talks, acceptance prevails in the U.K. (65%) and -- but only narrowly -- in the FRG (45%). The Dutch are divided at the 40 percent level:

	<u>BRITAIN</u>	<u>WEST GERMANY</u>	<u>ITALY</u>	<u>NETHERLANDS</u>	<u>BELGIUM</u>
Oppose INF	29%	36%	54%	41%	62%
Accept INF	65	45	42	39	39

With minor variations, the current findings are consistent with poll results from last July and October. Other than Belgium, the trends suggest generally increasing INF opposition in Italy and generally increasing acceptance in Britain. The pattern in the FRG and the Netherlands has changed very little.

The current survey shows that, when given deployment as a fait accompli, hard-core opposition declines in Italy and Belgium, indicating some softness in the high levels of opposition there.

That is, when asked their future reactions should their governments deploy in the absence of an arms agreement, people's "strong" opposition is markedly less in Italy (40%) and Belgium (24%) and slightly less in Britain (23%) and the Netherlands (35%). Opposition to this future deployment in Germany is at the same level (36%) as unconditional opposition today.

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Much Confusion, But Most Favor U.S. Interim Proposal

In all countries, one-half or more claim to have heard about President Reagan's interim proposal that "NATO stations fewer...missiles than currently planned and the USSR reduces (its) missiles, so that both sides have roughly the same number of medium-range nuclear missiles."

Majorities (up to 79% in the U.K.) say they support the U.S. initiative.

However, there is much uncertainty and confusion over INF proposals. When three proposals -- the zero option, the U.S. interim proposal, and the first Andropov proposal -- are explained, but sponsors not identified:

- o Pluralities in West Germany (51%), Italy (53%), and Belgium (44%) prefer the zero-option that "NATO station no new medium-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe, and the USSR dismantles all of its...missiles" over the other two alternatives. The Dutch and the British are as likely to favor the zero-option as the interim U.S. proposal (at roughly the 30%-level).
- o At the same time, many more identify the more recent interim proposal (40%-level) than the zero option (20%-level) as U.S.-sponsored.
- o In all countries, uncertainty is widespread about the government's position: no less than 40 percent anywhere either "don't know" or say their government favors the Andropov proposal.
- o Confusion is greatest about where the Soviets stand. In all countries, 40 percent or more "don't know" which is the Soviet proposal. And about as many (20%-30% range) identify the Soviets with the U.S. interim proposal as with the first Andropov proposal that "NATO stations no new... missiles" and the Soviets reduce theirs to "equal the number of nuclear missiles that the French and British have."

...And Perceived U.S. Sincerity in Negotiations Improves

Only about one person in five (but 37% in Italy) sees the U.S. interim proposal as evidence of increased U.S. "willingness to negotiate" an arms agreement. However, in this poll -- taken shortly after President Reagan announced his interim proposal -- there have been notable improvements in perceptions of U.S. sincerity in negotiations:

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- o In all countries, the number seeing the U.S. as making a "genuine effort" in arms negotiations has risen. The increase is greatest in the U.K. and the FRG, where majorities (54% and 61%, respectively) now see the U.S. as sincere in seeking an arms reduction agreement. Last October, this was a minority view in Britain and a division of opinion in the FRG.
- o A favorable perception also predominates in the Netherlands (46% to 29%). In Belgium and Italy (though barely) skepticism prevails.

In all countries, the U.S. does markedly better than the USSR in public perceptions of sincerity in negotiations. But the Soviets, too, have improved their standing in the Netherlands and, especially, in West Germany, where as many (35%-level) credit the USSR with making a genuine effort in seeking an arms agreement as do not.

By about a three-to-one margin (roughly 60%-to-20%) people in the U.K., Italy, and Belgium do not think the Soviets are making a genuine effort in negotiations.

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